

Independent Study Operations Manual

2000 Edition



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The guidance and statutory interpretation in this manual are not binding on local educational agencies or other entities. Except for the statutes and regulations that are referenced herein, this manual is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory. (See *Education Code* Section 33308.5.)



Prepared for publication
by CSEA members.

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Preface

THIS manual is designed to supply the information needed by schools, school districts, county offices of education, trainers of educators, and others to be able to offer the independent study instructional strategy to students at all grade levels through high school, including students in adult education. It contains the California state guidelines and legal requirements for independent study. The differences between legal requirements set forth in the *Education Code* and the *California Code of Regulations* versus guidelines, suggestions, and models are clearly indicated. A legal requirement is always identified by a legal reference. The use of the terms “should,” “must,” “needs to be,” and similar expressions without a definite legal reference are guidelines or suggestions and are not the law. “Should” generally indicates information or an understanding based on pertinent experience.

The consistent assumption in preparing and presenting this manual is that quality education will be achieved by following these guidelines. The information supplied about which students will benefit from independent study and which ones should remain in classroom-based instruction reflects research and experience. The same ground undergirds all parts of the manual. The acknowledgments reveal the scope of the experience-based expertise that has gone into this manual.

Three additional understandings are important for effective use of this manual:

1. Independent study does not necessarily occur in social isolation; it is a strategy that can be used effectively for students working outside of a classroom in groups of different sizes.
2. The sample forms, charts, and other indicative documents are not prescriptive. They are samples of documents that have been used successfully

and have been revised for use in this manual.

They may and usually should be adapted to local conditions while meeting all the requirements of law as set forth in this manual.

3. A district’s and county office of education’s educational standards apply to students engaged in independent study as they do to students in classrooms, even though the instructional modality is different. Students’ achievement is measured by the same examinations and is expected to be equal or superior to the students’ achievement in classrooms.

This edition of the independent study manual is the fourth edition in a series that was first published in 1981. In producing this edition, the principal objectives were to reflect the current *Education Code* and the revised state regulations. It has been updated to improve the ease with which teachers, counselors, administrators, and others could read and use it. The next edition will aim to achieve more improvements.

Loose-leaf binding is used to allow for insertion of revisions from the Department. Please note the reply coupon that comes with this manual. You are asked to fill in the information requested and return the coupon to the Department.

It is the hope and expectation of the California Department of Education and the many practicing educators who helped to produce this manual that it will be a significant tool for creating schools and learning opportunities that meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. It should bring satisfaction to students, teachers, parents, and all others who are dedicated to quality education, especially for students in need of optional alternatives to the classroom and flexibility in scheduling.

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